

**OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION
NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY**

**State System of Support Best Practices Grant
Request for Applications Release Date: December 1, 2014
Notice of Intent to Apply Submission Deadline: December 12, 2014
Mandatory Pre-Application Conference Date: December 12, 2014
Grant Application Submission Deadline: January 9, 2015**

The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (“OSSE”)’s Division of Elementary, Secondary and Specialized Education (“DESSE”) is charged with implementing a new State System of Support (“SSOS”) for schools that is based on data-driven, targeted technical assistance in ways that are meaningful and relevant to school needs. Under this system, OSSE seeks to promote partnerships between schools to address common challenges through the identification of best practices worthy of replication.

Purpose and Description: OSSE is soliciting grant applications from District of Columbia public schools that have successfully implemented academic improvement strategies and are willing to partner with other schools to disseminate and support the replication of these practices. This grant opportunity is a component of OSSE’s State System of Support (“SSOS”). The purpose of the grant is to reward schools for implementing best and promising practices, to foster innovation through the dissemination of these practices, and to provide funding to build effective relationships between higher-performing schools and schools in need of appropriate supports aimed at raising student achievement. Grantees will be required to partner with at least one school in Priority or Focus status.

Request for Applications: As a component of the State System of Support (“SSOS”), OSSE requests the submission of applications from schools that are interested in:

1. Opening up their schools for scheduled visits from leadership teams participating in the Learning Support Network;
2. Making available job-alike consultation and coaching, and sharing of resources to participating Learning Support Network Schools;
3. Playing a lead role with OSSE in the tri-annual OSSE LEA institutes and other opportunities for best practice dissemination, either through facilitation of a best practice session, participation on a panel, or through co-facilitation of a Community of Practice; and
4. Supporting OSSE in documenting/evaluating impact of the SSOS best practice dissemination strategy.

Applicant schools are encouraged to identify Learning Support Network Schools to partner with and to identify proposed partners by name in their applications. Alternatively, an applicant school may express a willingness to be partnered with a school selected by OSSE based on the needs of a partner school.

Applicants are encouraged to consider a wide range of activities that will reward staff for past work developing and implementing successful practices, support efforts to sustain/accelerate gains in applicant schools, effectively disseminate and seed those practices in partner schools, encourage staff in partnering schools to participate in all proposed activities and broadly foster evidence-based innovation.

Anticipated Number of Awards: OSSE seeks to fund three (3) or more Grantees. In the case that there are more applications than available funding, priority will be given to applications as described below.

Available Funding for Awards: It is anticipated that \$1,700,000 will be available for awards. Individual grants are expected to range between \$100,000 and \$500,000 per award. The amount of each award will be, in part, determined by the number of proposed Priority and Focus school partners. The duration of this grant is for a period of one (1) year from the grant award date.

Eligibility Criteria: OSSE seeks applications from all schools that believe that they have identified and successfully implemented a practice that has led to improved student achievement. LEAs may submit an application on behalf of one or more school(s) that meet the eligibility criteria described below but all applications will be evaluated at the school level. Schools which are part of multi-campus LEAs must submit applications that demonstrate LEA-level commitment to the project in order to be considered.

Schools in the following categories are eligible to apply:

- Schools who have been in Reward or Rising Status and have achieved cumulative growth of at least ten (10) points over the course of two (2) years in Reading or Math;
- Schools who are currently rated Tier I in PCSB's Performance Management Framework and schools who are rated Tier II with an overall percentage point rating of greater than fifty percent (50%); and
- Schools that are "beating the odds" and have demonstrated strong or significantly improved performance of specific student subgroups or groups of students typically considered "at-risk" while at least maintaining achievement levels for all other groups. Examples of successful applicants in this category include schools that have successfully exited Priority or Focus status through the demonstrated implementation of school-wide strategies or schools in Developing status with significant growth for a given subgroup.

In addition to the criteria above, priority for funding may be given on the basis of any of the following:

- Cross-LEA Collaboration: Applications from schools proposing to partner with schools in other LEAs may be given funding priority.
- Cross-Sector Collaboration: Applications from DCPS schools proposing to partner with charter schools and applications for charter school proposing to partner with DCPS schools may be given funding priority.
- Accelerating Improvement: Schools who can implement their proposed plan by June 30, 2015, may be given funding priority.
- Maximizing Impact: Schools who propose to partner with more than one Priority school may be given funding priority.
- Hitting the Ground Running: Schools who identify proposed partners and include a letter of commitment from the partner may be given funding priority.

Important Dates: The Request for Application (RFA) is expected to be available on December 1, 2014. Applications may be obtained from the OSSE website, <http://osse.dc.gov>. Applications may also be obtained from Ms. Katherine Cox. Please email Ms. Cox at Katherine.cox@dc.gov to request an electronic copy of the application. All schools planning to apply for this grant must submit a notification of Intent to Apply by December 12, 2014. The Intent to Apply form will be made available at the same time as the RFA and must be signed by the instructional leader of the applicant school and an authorized representative of the LEA. All parties planning to apply for this grant must also attend the Pre-Application Conference and are required to RSVP via email to Katherine Cox at Katherine.cox@dc.gov by December 12, 2014. The **mandatory** Pre-Application Conference will be held on December 12, 2014, 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. EST at 810 First Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002. The **deadline for application submission is January 9, 2014, via electronic submission at 3:30 p.m. EST.**